

Comments by Hans H. Hertell
United States Ambassador
Guide for Corporate Social Investment

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is an honor for me to be among such a distinguished group of persons, who are committed to the development of the Dominican Republic, in the launching of the Guide for Corporate Social Investment.

This guide, as explained by those who have preceded me here, is intended to provide answers to the most frequently asked questions of Dominican businessmen about the social co-sponsorship of economic development projects. In addition, the guide contains information concerning the management and the legal provisions necessary to increase and strengthen social responsibility in the Dominican Republic.

The Guide for Corporate Social Investment is the product of the Project for the Promotion of Private Social Investment, supported with funds from the United States government through the Inter-American Development Foundation and ALIANZA ONG. This is one more demonstration of the sense of brotherhood that exists between the United States and the Dominican Republic. Our hope is that this Guide will be a stimulus for the creation of other lasting and fruitful alliances in benefit of the social and economic development of the Dominican Republic.

I would like to congratulate the Alianza ONG and the Inter-American Foundation for this initiative. Both have a long and admirable history of work to improve the quality of life of citizens with few resources, and strengthening democratic participation, responsibility, and practices. The Foundation has facilitated social investment in several of Latin America and Caribbean countries, including the Dominican Republic, by working with multinational and local companies such as: Banco del Progreso, JP Morgan, Citibank, Green Giant, E. León Jimenez, just to mention a few.

We have observed during the last few years how U. S. corporations who invest abroad have not only responded to the social department demands where the companies develop their activities, but also have been able to demonstrate that social investment is beneficial for themselves.

By contributing to the formation of a healthy and educated work force, and a healthy environment, the companies are seen by the members of the community as part of them, and of the solution to their problems. This alliance translates into an increase in profits as well as a reduction of social differences within the employees or the community.

Many companies today are investing enormous sums in education, health, the environment, and other programs, which really do not form part of their business

specialty. They have realized that being seen as a good corporate citizen is part of being competitive in today's global economy.

Often the best projects are those, which result from an alliance between the private sector, the NGO's, and the government. For example, the government can facilitate a project or donate land or other resources, the NGO's can motivate the participation of communities and help to carry out the project, and the private sector can donate resources and provide experts.

In the projects sponsored by the U.S., through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), we always try to create this tripartite alliance. For example, we are supporting a partnership between the government, NGO's, and the private sector for a more competitive and sustainable tourism in the eastern region, especially in the zone of La Romana-Bayahibe. We are also negotiating with the government and the private sector to implement an alliance so that the private sector can adopt public schools, based on the experience developed by Falconbridge Dominicana.

Other alliances facilitated by USAID in Latin America and the Caribbean includes working with the Association of Chocolate Manufacturers, the Mars Corporation, and the Coffee Specialty Association, for the creation of new markets for coffee and cocoa.

Alliances between the private sector, the government, and non-governmental organizations have served in the recent past as a platform to achieve the success reached in the post-Hurricane Georges Reconstruction project, financed by the United States government. Each one of these initiatives is present in the application of the guides for social investment, which you yourselves have developed.

We firmly believe that while the private sector increases its participation in development projects, with the government, the not-for-profit organizations, and international entities, they very much increase the possibilities that all Dominicans can benefit from the economic growth of this great country, and thus achieve a better and more stable Dominican Republic.

To conclude, I would like to congratulate all of the members of the private sector who are here with us today for their efforts in ensuring a healthy, equitable, and responsible society, which can bring a better future for the Dominican Republic. To those other members of the sector, I invite you to join in this movement that can create the brilliant future that we all want for our children. I assure you that the people and the government of the United States will offer you all of our support.